

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 080115
ORIGIN AF-10

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DRAFTED BY AF/P:BARUSSELL:ADR
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R 290319Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
XMT AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BISSAU
AMEMBASSY GABORONE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 28, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S NOON BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL

VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

Q: CLAUDIA TOWNSEND OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE CHECKED WITH THEIR CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND NOTED THAT, IN HER WORDS, "THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE SCHEDULED MEETING OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND CONGRESSMAN DIGGS IN NIGERIA," WHICH MEETING I DISCOVER WAS REPORTED IN A PAGE ONE STORY IN THE WASHINGTON STAR ON MARCH 23RD AS WELL AS IN A DIGGS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE ON THAT DAY.

MY QUESTION IS THIS, SINCE YESTERDAY, SOME 50 REPORTERS WERE TOLD AT A BRIEFING IN THIS ROOM ON THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO AFRICA THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS CARTER-DIGGS MEETING, IS THIS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT A PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN OVERSEAS DUE TO A BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATIONS, OR INTELLIGENCE, OR WHAT?

A: WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE BRIEFER YESTERDAY HAD IN MIND WHEN HE ANSWERED YOUR QUESTION. THE ONLY THING I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT IT IS, I'M AWARE THAT THE CONGRESSMAN IS IN AFRICA AS PART OF HIS CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

Q: RIGHT.

A: BUT THAT'S AS FAR AS I CAN TAKE YOU.
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Q: TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE DID THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA, THE WHITE HOUSE OR THE STATE DEPARTMENT EXPRESS TO CONGRESSMAN DIGGS A FEELING THAT IT WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS DIALOGUE WHEN THE PRESIDENT MEETS WITH THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT?

A: I JUST DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA.

Q: IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE NOT AWARE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT EVER URGED MR. DIGGS TO BE ON HAND, ARE YOU?

A: I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FACTS ARE, NO. I'M NOT AWARE.
COOPER

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NNN

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